

**HOW PREPARED**

**ARE YOU FOR**

**AN EMERGENCY?**

**BE AWARE  
BE PREPARED**



# BE AWARE LIGHTNING STORMS EXPLOSIONS FLOODS

## **So you think it won't happen to you?**

It's the middle of the night and you're awakened by a smoke alarm...now...you smell smoke.....what do you do?

## **How prepared are you?**

The information in this booklet is aimed at helping you prepare for an emergency in your home.



**BE PREPARED**

**EMERGENCY FIRE**

### **Important notice**

This material was produced with funding provided by the Attorney-General's Department through the Working Together to Manage Emergencies initiative.

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# LOSS OF TELEPHONE

# SEVERE STORMS

## **What is an emergency?**

People have personal emergencies every day – you could lock yourself out of the house or lose a wallet. But for the purpose of preparing for an emergency, it can be defined as:

‘Any incident that can cause death, or significant injuries or that can cause significant damage or disruption to your property and belongings, or poses an environmental threat to you or your family that requires sudden and urgent action by individuals and agencies.’

### **Emergency events include:**

- fires;
- hazardous material spills;
- flooding;
- severe storms;
- earthquake;
- explosion; and
- loss of telephone, electricity, water or gas supply disruption.

The Coode Island chemical fire, the Longford gas crisis and the frequent devastating stories of fires and floods in people’s homes, illustrates the serious impact emergencies can have on people, their homes, possessions and safety.

Unfortunately emergencies can happen without warning. Through proper planning you can help yourself and your family to better respond to and quickly recover from an emergency.

Prepare yourself and your property in five steps, whether you live in a high-rise or a house/single level dwelling. By following some simple steps you can prepare yourself for any event – large or small.

## EARTHQUAKES

### **Step 1** Develop an emergency plan

Involve all family and household members and people who may come to your home on a regular basis to offer you support and assistance in planning; don't forget to include guide dogs, assistance dogs and pets in your emergency plan.

- 1** Work out the potential emergencies that may exist or impact on you and your family.
- 2** Work out what you could do for each type of emergency and consider ways to protect your family and yourself
  - a. Work out all possible exit routes from each room, the building, and from your surrounding neighbourhood
  - b. Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.  
If you cannot do this on your own, ask for help.
- 3** Put emergency numbers beside each telephone. You can also program these numbers into the memory on your telephone and keep a list of the memory buttons close by the telephone. If you cannot do this on your own, ask for help.

- 4 Locate the water, electricity, and gas shut off points located near the meter of your home and learn how to switch them off safely if you can. If you cannot switch them off safely yourself, you will be able to tell people who come to help you where they are.
- 5 Work out a safe place to go if there is an emergency and make sure everyone in the household knows that is the meeting place. If you live alone, tell a neighbour, friend or relative where you will go if there is an emergency so they know where to find you.
- 6 Make sure you have enough household insurance. For information on how to adequately insure your home and contents visit [www.ica.com.au](http://www.ica.com.au) or telephone (02) 9253 5100.

# BIRTH CERTIFICATE



- 7 If you live in a high rise/multi level building:
  - a. Introduce yourself to your neighbours so they know you are there and can check to see if you need any help in an emergency.
  - b. Make sure you know where all exit signs, floor plans and evacuation information is placed on notice boards. If you cannot find this information in a way you can easily understand, speak to your body corporate manager or real estate agent. If you cannot do this on your own ask for help.
  - c. Ask the Body Corporate Building Manager to test your Building Plan at least once a year. Check (within your own apartment) your smoke detectors and change the batteries yearly. Schedule to change batteries on the days when clocks are either put forward or put back each year.

- d. If you are an owner, check with the Body Corporate Manager to ensure the building has adequate building insurance. Ensure you have sufficient contents insurance whether you are an owner occupier or tenant.
- e. Review and practice your emergency plan.

### **Step 2 Copy important documents**

Keep extra copies of your important documents away from your residence, either with a family member, trusted friend or consider buying a safe or renting a safety deposit box. You could also buy a fire resistant tin to put your copies of the documents in. Examples of these documents include:

Birth Certificate • Marriage Certificate • Driver Licence • Passport  
Social Security/Medicare/Healthcare card • Will • Prescriptions  
**Insurance Information:** Car, Health, Home, etc.

**Financial Information:** Credit Cards, Account numbers, financial plans, etc.

# ATES FINANCIAL II



### **Step 3 Designate an out-of-area contact person**

It's difficult to contact everyone you know when you're in the middle of an emergency. Try to choose somebody who is unlikely to be affected by the same emergency. Give that person the names and contact information of people you would like to keep informed of your welfare in an emergency situation.

**Step 4 Know your local community resources and become one yourself**

Get to know your neighbours, create your own community where you can help each other find out where other buildings in the area intend to evacuate, to avoid people evacuating to the same area.

**Step 5 Put together a 'Go Bag'**

A 'Go Bag' would be used in the event of an evacuation. It should be easy to carry and have an identity tag. Make one for your home and consider preparing one for your workplace and vehicle.



What should go in the bag? Think of what you personally need if you suddenly had to evacuate:

- a copy of your personal 'Important Information' template that you have completed. This template comes with this booklet ready for you to complete;
- a bottle of water;
- a torch, AM radio and extra batteries (check the batteries' shelf life);
- walking shoes, a jumper and trousers and a lightweight rain coat;
- any other personal items that are critical to you, e.g. an extra cane, spare batteries for hearing aid;
- a roll of toilet paper, tissues, a plastic bag, other personal hygiene supplies;
- a pen and note pad;
- a phone card;
- first aid and personal medications;
- extra house and car keys; and
- a mobile phone if you have one and a charger.

Remember, in an emergency some ATM machines may not be working and banks could be closed, so consider including a small amount of money in small denominations in the bag. Limit items to essentials only.

# 0 BAG' FIRST AID



## During an emergency:

- Stay calm.
- Listen for instructions by tuning into radio ABC 774 (AM) band.
- Cooperate fully with the emergency services and authorities involved in responding to the emergency. If you have a disability, tell the emergency services worker or person who comes to help you about it. If you are calling an emergency service for help, tell the telephone operator about your Disability. If you tell those who are going to assist you about your Disability they will know the best way to help you.
- Sometimes staying inside your home is safer than leaving. Ensure you listen to authorities' advice.
- If you are told to evacuate take your 'Go Bag' and use travel routes specified by the authorities to the designated assembly or relief areas.

## Emergency Relief Centres

During an emergency the City of Melbourne activates a number of sites to serve as Emergency Relief Centres to support the community. Make sure you listen to radio ABC 774 (AM) for information on Emergency Relief Centre locations or you can also contact the City of Melbourne for information on 9658 9658.

**STAY CALM LISTEN**



## Consider the safety of your pets

**Cats & dogs** – have a sturdy carry case and a leash on hand. Even if your pets are not usually on a lead, you don't want to lose them in an emergency. If you do not have a sturdy carry cage for your cat, use a cotton pillow case to carry them in.

**Birds** – keep them in their cage to make transportation easier.

**Fresh water fish** – empty them into a plastic bag with the water from their fish bowl.

For all pets we suggest that you learn how to look after them if they are removed from their normal surroundings for a long period of time.

## Guide and Assistance Dogs

If you have a Guide Dog or Assistance Dog you will be able to take it with you if you need to leave your home and go to an Emergency Relief Centre.

If there is a fire in your home and you need to call the MFB for assistance, you should tell the Operator that you have a Guide Dog or Assistance Dog that may also need help. If the MFB are aware that a Guide Dog, Assistance Dog or pet is involved they will try to locate and rescue the animal and will generally apply oxygen therapy if needed. The MFB will also call the RSPCA and Victoria Police to help if needed.



## **Review your emergency plan and important information checklist**

By regularly testing your emergency plan and keeping it updated you will give yourself and your family a better chance of recovering quickly from any unforeseen incident.

Practice using your escape route in case you have to get out of your home quickly. You should have more than one escape route planned just in case one is blocked off by the emergency.

If you have a vision impairment it is a good idea to practice getting around your house in different levels of light in case there is a power blackout.

## **In the event of an emergency dial 000**

If you have a Vision Impairment and have TTY (Teletypewriter or textphone) 106 is the text Emergency Number with direct access to emergency services 24 hours a day. Calls to 106 are free. 106 can only be contacted through TTY and cannot be contacted from an ordinary telephone or mobile phone.

When you call 000 or 106 you need to request Police, Fire or Ambulance. The Operator will ask you some questions and pass the information on to the Emergency Service. Stay calm, listen to the questions you are asked carefully and answer as best you can. If you have a Disability that affects your speech tell the Operator. It is a good idea to tell the Operator of any Disability you may have so that can be passed on to the Emergency Service – the more information they have the better they can help you.

**DIAL 000 ESCAPE**

**AMB**

**DOWN**

Don't forget to tell the Operator if you have a Guide Dog, Assistance Dog or pet that also needs assistance.

The sort of questions you will be asked are:

**WHERE** is your emergency?

**WHAT** is your nearest street corner?

**WHAT** has happened?

Be prepared to give a CALL BACK CONTACT NUMBER

## How do I know which emergency service I need?

### When to call POLICE:

- Somebody's safety is in danger
- Car accident
- A suspected crime is in progress

### When to call AMBULANCE:

- Severe chest/abdominal pain
- Unconscious person
- Severe breathing problems
- Fall, injury or accident

### When to call FIRE:

- See or smell fire or smoke
- Smoke alarm operates

### When to call STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE:

- Tree collapse
- Roof damage
- Rising floodwaters

Call **132 500** for SES

**POWER BLACKOUT**



**ROUTE SMOKE ALA**

## Recovering from an emergency

Any kind of emergency can be stressful for people and everybody will react differently. Coping after an emergency can be difficult but a number of organisations offer services and assistance.

The Department of Human Services provides fact sheets covering topics such as:

- stress after emergencies;
- emergency and/or temporary accommodation information and advice;
- financial assistance;
- personal support services;
- material aid; and
- information provision.

**ROOF DAMAGE REPAIR**

**TREES COLLAPSE**



Department of Human Services  
1300 650 172

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

The Australian Red Cross can also  
offer assistance in an emergency

Australian Red Cross  
National Office  
155 Pelham Street  
Carlton VIC 3053

Postal: PO Box 196  
Carlton Vic 3053

Telephone: 9345 1800

Facsimile: 9348 2513

**ISING FLOODWATER**



**ASSISTANCE**  
**STRESS**

# Be Aware Be Prepared



## Essential Household Information

This form helps you to record information on personal needs, medical conditions and pets. It may assist you and Emergency Service Agencies if you need to evacuate your home.

Keep this information in a safe place. It is also a good idea to keep a copy in your 'Go Bag'

## Property Details

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Household Members

Name	Adult/Child (tick)	Medications and prescriptions	Allergies, special needs (e.g. glasses, cane, hearing aid)
	Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/>		

## Guide Dog, Assistance Dog, Pets

Name (and ID number)	Breed	Guide Dog/Assistance Dog/Pet (tick)	Location in house/yard where animal usually lives
		Guide Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Pet <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Guide Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Pet <input type="checkbox"/>	

## Emergency Contacts

Name	Address	Contact Number	Relationship (Friend, family)

Sponsored by



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*Working Together to Manage Emergencies*  
This project funded through the  
Local Grants Scheme

Do you have a question for the  
City of Melbourne? Call and speak to us.

- 9280 0716 አማርኛ
- 9280 0717 廣東話
- 9280 0718 Ελληνικά
- 9280 0719 Bahasa Indonesian
- 9280 0720 Italiano
- 9280 0721 國語
- 9280 0722 Somali
- 9280 0723 Español
- 9280 0724 Türkçe
- 9280 0725 Việt Ngữ
- 9280 0726 All other languages



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